

Grant to reduce river's pollution

Money to allow Port Barrington to improve sewer system near Fox River

Addressing dirty water

U.S. Rep. Don Manzullo announced Thursday that Port Barrington will receive \$500,000 from the federal government for a water cleanup plan.



Manzullo

By NICK BUNKLEY
The Northwest Herald

PORT BARRINGTON – A \$500,000 grant announced Thursday by U.S. Rep. Don Manzullo should benefit residents throughout the Fox River watershed, environmentalists said.

The federal grant will help Port Barrington build a \$2.4 million sewer system to replace failing septic systems at 200 homes.

Septic systems in the village, for-

merly known as Fox River Valley Gardens, dump about 70,000 gallons of raw and partly treated sewage into the Fox River every day.

"You just can't continue to have raw sewage like this going into the Fox River," Manzullo spokesman Rich Carter said.

"It helps everyone in McHenry County and Kane County, and anywhere along the Fox River, because in the long run, it's going to mean cleaner water."

More than 200,000 people get their

drinking water from the river, which has long suffered from pollution. Several years ago, it was listed as one of the nation's 10 most-threatened waterways by the conservation group American Rivers.

"With failing septs, it means you can get fecal bacteria into the water, and that's bad for everyone who swims and skis in the Fox River," said Cindy Skrukrud, clean-water advocate for the Illinois chapter of the Sierra Club.

See GRANT, page 2

Grant

Continued from page 1

Construction of the village's sewer system, which will send wastewater to the Island Lake Sanitary District for treatment, should begin soon after the funding is available, Village President Jack R. Motley said.

It is scheduled to be completed by 2005.

The grant, which is part of an appropriations bill passed by the U.S. House of Representatives, could be released as soon as October if it is approved by the Senate and signed into law.

"It's very exciting news," Motley said. "Plans have been

approved by the state. They're done and ready to go."

Many of the homes currently on septic systems were built at least 40 years ago, Motley said. Newer homes in the small-but-growing community already are part of the Island Lake network.

Property owners with septic have been restricted from building additions, garages, decks, outbuildings and pools.

"There are a fair amount of septs that absolutely fail at certain times of the year, especially when there are high water levels because we're right on the Fox River," he said.

Without federal funding, residents would have had to pay about \$1,200 annually for sewer hookups, more than six

times the national average, Carter said.

A few miles up the river, Johnsburg is building a wastewater treatment plant that also is being funded through a grant secured by Manzullo. That village currently sends about 1 million gallons of sewage into the river daily.

"There's still a number of small communities in the Fox River watershed that still do not have their waste going through sewage treatment plants," said David Horn, president of Crystal Lake-based environmental group Friends of the Fox River.

"Anytime you have a community that is now going to have their sewage treated, that's good for the river."